

RQG – 150 – Bedrock Misery

Content Warnings

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ALEX

Hi everyone, Alex here. I'd just like to take a moment to thank some of patrons. Emma Laser, Sally Milson, HM, Kitty Lace Cosplay, Jacqueline Sheckle, Kim Void, Choptail, Jessica Reddy, Eleanor Cory, L Holson, Lil Mouse, Lewis Frampton, Joe Allington, Caitlin Cassidy, Kirsten Walker, Sarah Millman, Sadiga, Holly Robinson, King Kale. Thank you all. We really appreciate your support. If you'd like to join them go to www.patreon.com/rustyquill and take a look at our rewards.

[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 150 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and with me today, I have

BEN

Ben Meredith

BRYN

Bryn Monroe

Rusty Quill Gaming – 150 – Bedrock Misery

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas

HELEN

And Helen Gould

ALEX

And who are you playing?

BEN

Zolf Smith

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan

LYDIA

[whispers] still the birthday girl!

(laughing)

Oh wait, Cel Sidebottom!

HELEN

And Azu

ALEX

And Ben I want you to know that I enjoy that you're getting more pain, I actually reintroduced because everyone was like why did you stop. So I was like, you know what, give the people what they want.

HELEN

I think more directly it was don't give Ben what he wants!

ALEX

That's what I said right.

(laughing)

It's that meme where it's like corporate want you to stop the difference. There is no difference. Cool. So we are going to pick up where we left off which is there is a closed door behind you. And on the other side of the closed door is a big cave full of sadness and misery.

LYDIA

Like so I know that this isn't the most comfortable spot but we, as far as we can tell, we have a lot of rock between us and any potential kraken attempts and while the situation inside that room is horrific, it doesn't seem particularly dynamic. Nothing is changing there. Nothing is particularly more threatening. So what I can say is that if we have a rest now we could probably take on whatever might be coming in future.

ALEX

I am actively in love with Cel's absolutely to describe a situation. That is the most efficient description ever. I love it!

BRYN

I think I agree and apart from anything else, if we wait with Shoin go...

BEN

If I'm outvoted, I'm outvoted. I'll keep first watch now get some rest.

BRYN

The drugs might start wearing off. It might improve the situation, maybe.

LYDIA

I mean it might, we should possibly be prepared for if their memories come back, some significant trauma.

BRYN

Oh yeah.

LYDIA

So being...do you have any abilities to make people sleep? I know that magic people sometimes...

BRYN

Four people at a time.

ALEX

How many thousands of kobolds can you affect with sleep?

LYDIA

No, no but this is like...like these two.

BRYN

Four. Not for thousands. Four.

LYDIA

No, no but I mean these two here. If we are going to rest and then like if halfway through the night and they don't get their dose and they begin to realise how terrible wrong everything is and then you can help them sleep and then they will rest through it and honestly I have found that one of the best things for trauma is safety and sleep. You know...

BRYN

You know what...yeah I could make these kobolds sleep if we want them to.

You mean now or...

LYDIA

No, no, no...

HELEN

In case they have trouble I think what Cel is...

BRYN

I mean morning but...

LYDIA

Yeah we don't hurt them but we also protect them until they can look after themselves.

BRYN

I'm going to cast endure elements on myself and maybe on Skraak because it'll last 24 hours and if I'm about to sleep I'll be able to start casting more spells again so might as well use them up.

LYDIA

That's a good idea. Unfortunately my spells only work on me because I can cut the potions but I will do that for myself. You, you're an excellent little buddy. Well done little buddy.

ALEX

As a reminder, your big bells and whistles new spells, even if you are resting are not going to reactivate. These are for all the ones that you already have. Your big bells and whistles one will only come at the end of the dungeon. You need more time than just a hurried nap in a stone corridor to try and...

BEN

We're taking a long rest. We're taking a long rest.

ALEX

Even with that, you're not getting...

LYDIA

Oh ok.

ALEX

I'm specifically saying you're getting any new spells. As in you are replenishing...

BRYN

The benefits of new spells and new feats but everything else.

ALEX

That's exactly what I'm talking about.

BRYN

Right ok.

HELEN

So when will we get those?

ALEX

Basically once you're out of dungeon.

HELEN

Oh ok, alright.

BEN

I'm taking first watch. Get some rest.

HELEN

Thank you.

BRYN

So as I said I will cast endure elements on myself and on Skraak and it lasts 24 hours.

ALEX

So can you please give me a perception check Zolf. You're on your first watch, yes.

BEN

Yes

LYDIA

I am also getting endure elements on myself.

ALEX

That's fine.

BEN

27

ALEX

Azu do you settle down with Skraak around your neck?

HELEN

I think I gently unhook him and put him down.

ALEX

That's fine. Skraak basically goes and the three kobolds that you have now, seem to form a pile. It's a natural thing. They literally just clump up the way that, say like, honestly like lizards do basically. They clump together. It helps with the...

BRYN

I would like to sleep near them but not in the pile.

ALEX

That's fine. But yeah they've clumped up.

LYDIA

Soon though! Your dragon-y self is showing.

ALEX

Your watch passes completely uneventfully beyond the fact that Skraak seems to settle down partially from almost like, like trauma catatonia to asleep of sorts. That's as much as you're really going to notice.

BEN

Sure. Once it's over, I'll wake up Azu.

HELEN

Yeah I'll take watch.

ALEX

Azu takes watch. Can you give me a perception check please.

HELEN

Ooh! That was so close to being a 2! That's a 31.

LYDIA

With a natural 20.

HELEN

Yeah.

LYDIA

It teetered on the edge listeners. It teetered. There was a tension.

ALEX

Wait is that a 30 or a natural...or a 31? Just so I know. I mean hypothetically.

HELEN

A 31.

ALEX

Nice.

BRYN

Well it was a natural 20 though which is sometimes more important.

ALEX

I mean it's not a guarantee of...no it's fine, I'm just messing with you. So you on your watch discern a few things. The kobolds that you have just met, effectively, they lie down and just lie there with their eyes open for a while. At some point during your shift Zolf they close their eyes. Azu by your point you

can see them starting to transition into actual sleep as opposed to an order to rest. I don't know how else to describe it.

HELEN

Yeah, well that's good.

ALEX

So they are now starting to match up a little bit with Skraak in terms of their...the breathing of sleep. I don't know how else to put it. You also discern, at first you don't even notice it because discerning the noises is quite difficult because there's just...there's the gentle like hum of machinery, maybe like the sound of like the occasional drip or shifting earth or whatever but nothing like...nothing about to collapse or anything. But you do definitely start to hear the sounds of activity on the other side of the door. Not frenzied activity. Not a cacophony but it's gone from there's no noises to there's rattling noises. With that perception you realise that you're hearing movement from the cells nearest to the door. Not like bang, bang, bang, bang just subtle movements.

BRYN

They're no longer standing like weird statues probably.

ALEX

Potentially. Additionally, you also...like towards the end of your watch, mechanically for obvious reasons at the end of your watch you hear footsteps approaching. Big heavy booted ones. Not small tappy kobold ones.

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BEN

Oh dear.

HELEN

From which direction?

ALEX

Further down the corridor that you are in. Not back towards the door

HELEN

Ok so where we are heading.

ALEX

Yeah where you were heading to.

BEN

So is this worth bearing in mind that we have to actually take 12 hours.

ALEX

Mechanically here's what's happening. This is happening when you've all got your stuff back.

BEN

Ok fine.

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HELEN

So lay on hands and everything back.

ALEX

Yeah

HELEN

Phew!

BRYN

Ah the relief in Helen's face.

ALEX

I am going to throw you a bone. Your ability for poison, like your lay hands now cures poison thing, I'm going to allow.

HELEN

Thank you because we have been in an alchemy lab for like 12 weeks

ALEX

I like thematically it is an appropriate time for that to start kicking in.

HELEN

Same

ALEX

I think if I was Aphrodite and I literally played favourites, which apparently they do.

HELEN

Ok.

ALEX

Booted boots are a booting towards you.

HELEN

I wake everyone up.

BRYN

Oh what, erm...

ALEX

Because you were on watch you were already wearing your armour and stuff.

HELEN

There's someone coming. Other side.

BRYN

I guess we get ready and see who they are.

BEN

Yep.

ALEX

There's not really any places to hide in this long, straight corridor. FYI

LYDIA

Do we want to maybe like spread out slightly because if someone can throw an explosion then it's nice to not all...

HELEN

Shall we wake the kobolds as well?

LYDIA

Let them sleep.

HELEN

But they might get...

BEN

Wake them in case they're killed.

BRYN

Yeah

HELEN

Alright I pat the kobolds.

ALEX

Skraak awakens first. Skraak seems a lot more with it than normal. Skraak is taller than you remember amongst other things. I mean that literally. Skraak is literally taller than you remember and the other ones seem a little bit more, well a lot more cautious and curious around you. A little more watchful. They're less like basically zombified as it were and a bit more like, ok what. There is a very hurried conversation between Skraak and the others. Hamid you won't have time to tell the others. It's basically a they're alright. Let's trash this place and everyone in it.

HELEN

Yay!

ALEX

Apart from these guys. That's the conversation as close as I can gather. The others are a little bit...in the nicest way possible, the others are still a little bit dim as Skraak was so Skraak's conversation by the way, I'm not going to dive into the RP of this now is actual conversation. The others are little bit more like mm, yeah ark...mm yeah. Whereas Skraak's actually talking. But that's an RP for another time because a boots are a walking.

LYDIA

Very small thing is that I put draconic in my level up.

ALEX

That will begin to come into effect soon.

LYDIA

So I only hear that Skraak is talking about destroying. I think I caught that word. So I just cast Hamid a very worried look.

ALEX

Can everyone please roll me initiative. I sincerely doubt it's going to come into play much though.

BEN

21

HELEN

22

LYDIA

Yay!

ALEX

Oh yay!

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HELEN

Oh wait you said no new feats.

ALEX

It's passive I'll allow it.

HELEN

Wehee!

ALEX

Oh no wait! No, no is it a feat that you got it from?

HELEN

Yeah improved initiative.

ALEX

No.

LYDIA

Oh!

HELEN

But still 19. No wait it's 18!

(laughing)

ALEX

There you go.

HELEN

I had so many emotions!

(laughing)

BRYN

15

ALEX

Bryn 15.

LYDIA

18

ALEX

Oh, oh, oh. Who has the higher dexterity?

BEN

Who do you think?

LYDIA

I definitely do. Definitely.

ALEX

Right Zolf you are up first. I am going to say that there is a surprise round. There is a slight bend in the corridor 60 feet down. They pass the slight bend. We are in a surprise round. I don't think they're even aware of you yet but you can all see them.

BEN

Ok, what do they look like?

ALEX

They are a lad and/or bloke. To be specific they are a quite weighty, as in like overweight, bordering on portly jowly, quite tall maybe like pushing 6 foot human, male, shaved head, couple of piercings in one ear, wearing leathers and carrying what appears to be...have you seen this yet...no, actually you probably wouldn't have seen one yet, a wind up torch.

BEN

Ok

LYDIA

Like the one we used in the catacombs.

ALEX

Yes but you wouldn't have seen one *here* yet.

LYDIA

And also Cel hasn't seen one.

ALEX

He's carrying one of them. It is European technology for what it's worth.

BEN

How's he dressed?

ALEX

He is dressed in non armour kind of, you know what he's dressed in, he's dressed in evil lair faceless mook costume. You can see his face I'm afraid. Visors haven't progressed yet but he is wearing a jumpsuit with literally some like weird...it's basically a QR code and he has pouches on his belt.

HELEN

With a name tag saying "Jay Doe"

BEN

How...

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ALEX

I think you'll find it's "T Smith"

BEN

How far away?

ALEX

60 feet.

BRYN

Very important question. Blue veins?

ALEX

Oh no.

BEN

So I can't charge him.

ALEX

You know what, I'd say he's exactly charging distance because I want him to be.

BEN

Yeah sure. Glaive on, charge him, couple of shots to the leg.

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ALEX

Proceed.

BEN

Yeah that's a death threat and a critical. But it is a 29

ALEX

To hit?

BEN

Well 31.

ALEX

31 to hit

BEN

+2 for...

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ALEX

I'm afraid it miss...kidding, kidding.

BEN

Oh my god, there's a monster!

ALEX

Ha, ha it's a mimic god. No you're fine.

BEN

That is 19 damage to his leg.

ALEX

He's just down. Immediately.

BEN

Oh ok.

ALEX

He's technically not unconscious actually now I think about.

BEN

Good, that's what I didn't want.

ALEX

If anyone wants him to be unconscious though, you take your turn, you can make this happen. Just so you all know.

BEN

I guess would I be allowed to, as he goes down, clamp my hand over his mouth. Is that allowable or have I done too much this round?

ALEX

Mechanically it's not allowable. However I'm going to allow it. This is flavour, this person, you are now all restocked up. This is grossly overmatched. I'm just going to allow it.

BEN

It's more I scream and alert the other 20 guards.

ALEX

It's fine. Like I said this is entirely flavourful. You're fine. With that in mind, Cel. You are currently up. Zolf has single hit this person down to the ground and covered their mouth. They're still conscious. Do you choose to do anything with that?

LYDIA

I stroll over very quickly and say, oi. In Japanese. What on earth are you doing here? This is some kind of horrible prison...like whatever it takes with how many seconds I have.

ALEX

About that.

LYDIA

Yeah. Some kind of horrible prison energy, potion, alchemy. This is a crime against alchemy and kobolds and also probably some kind of convention...

ALEX

Now I'm stopping you. Cel does talk quicker than most but at the same time I have to draw a limit. Azu you're up.

HELEN

I want to go over and glare intimidatingly.

ALEX

That's fine. Hamid.

BRYN

I saunter over and cast detect thoughts.

HELEN

Ooh!

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ALEX

That's fine.

BRYN

I concentrate on this person. Please make a will save for this person.

ALEX

What's the DC?

BRYN

16

ALEX

They fail their will save spectacularly.

BRYN

I can now hear their surface thoughts for the next few minutes.

ALEX

Ok let me get this right. Their surface thoughts are...

BEN

Are they translated?

BRYN

No if they're all in Japanese it's useless. Which is a high probability but it's still...

ALEX

I'm going to...I have a way of doing this basically. So the surface thoughts are as follows, arghhhhh! Japanese – arghhhh. Japanese – arghhhh. That's their surface thoughts.

(laughing)

BRYN

Good use of a spell slot Bryn. Well done. High class play as always.

ALEX

I don't know what you expected. They got glaived in a surprise round. Argh and Japanese. The system works. I'm going to drop out of initiative because I feel like it might be overkill. But loving the enthusiasm there.

BRYN

Good work Zolf.

BEN

Is Cel continuing to rant?

LYDIA

Cel is continuing to rant in Japanese at this person. They're extremely...

BEN

I'm just going to look at you until you stop.

ALEX

Can everyone give me a perception roll.

BRYN

24

HELEN

Also 24

LYDIA

29

BEN

20

ALEX

Everyone notices Skraak is going to murder this man and the others are probably going to help. He's literally approaching it. He has picked up the

sphere. He is going to murder this man in front of you. Just so that you know. you have enough time to react.

BRYN

I shout at the kobolds to stop in draconic.

ALEX

The smaller ones do, Skraak doesn't. You have basically...I'm going to allow everyone to take a turn because Skraak is because he's doing the slow approach. He is not charging. He will...like you all know this, he will murder this man unless someone intervenes. Just FYI. Azu?

HELEN

Azu notices Skraak is coming in and is just like ermm...probably shouldn't let this.

ALEX

What...what action are you taking? I need to know. Everyone's getting a chance to take an action.

HELEN

Azu is going to go over to Skraak and put a gentle hand on his chest and be like, you don't have to do this. And just sort of try and say with her face, slow...slow down.

BEN

Cel. Cel!

LYDIA

What? Yes?

ALEX

And Hamid? Oh you gave the order didn't you. Sorry.

BRYN

Yeah. I mean I guess that's not a standard action but if Azu doesn't successfully stop Skraak I have a standard action I can take but I'm basically holding it for now.

ALEX

That's fine. Skraak stops at Azu's hand.

BEN

Can I have my reaction to him?

ALEX

Yes as long as it's for things that aren't going to involve unpinning this guy.

BEN

Cel?

LYDIA

Yes. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

BEN

Tell him to answer our questions. If he makes a noise I'll kill him.

LYDIA

You! We have questions. And you will die if you do not answer them.

ALEX

Sorry I've been working on a pronunciation...mmmm [gagged noise]

LYDIA

We can make the pain not stop but be maybe slightly less for a little bit of time if you answer...what are our questions?

ALEX

I am going to jump to Skraak. So Skraak is stood extremely assertively and tall. Whereas before he'd been kind of twitchy and frankly more lizard-y, that's kind of gone. He's stood full...like fully erect. Tail is perfectly still and she just looks Azu dead in the eyes and says move.

BRYN

In English?

HELEN

In English?

ALEX

Yes

HELEN

Ooh. In which case I say, we need to talk to him first at least.

ALEX

Move. Now.

BRYN

Skraak...

ALEX

He's all snarl, with a big old spear that's not pointed at you.

HELEN

That's good to know.

BRYN

Skraak we're going to make him pay for what he's done to all of you.

ALEX

Yes. Now.

BRYN

We need to find out what he knows first or can you tell us about the rest of these caverns.

ALEX

I'm not going to reply in diplomacy check.

BEN

I am going to get involved if I hear Skraak speaking English. Once he's answered our questions, we'll let you kill him. Just wait a bit. In English obviously so...

ALEX

Fine. Skraak's colour has also begun to change. Currently it is coming out as quite red. It's gone from like quite faded, it's kind of a little bit more drab to it's becoming quite vibrantly red.

LYDIA

Oh it's mating season.

ALEX

Very much so! He is stood stiff as a board. He is...you can see cords standing out on his neck as he stands there and waits for your interrogation. And I think that's a nice part to take a break.

And welcome back to [singing] murdering people that deserve it, is it ethical

BEN

[singing] we're all murderers so we think it is.

ALEX

Yeah. Precedent has already been set

BRYN

We're all professional murderers.

LYDIA

Cel hasn't...

ALEX

Cel hasn't professionally murdered people with this group.

BEN

Oh on camera fair and maybe not at all.

ALEX

With that in mind we come back in then. Skraak is going to be silent and still waiting for the chance to stab the person a lot.

BRYN

I would like to cast another spell. The spell I would like to cast is comprehend languages.

ALEX

Are you able to maintain concentration on detect thoughts and have comprehend languages.

BRYN

Neither of them require concentration to be maintained. They are just ongoing affects.

ALEX

Oh my!

BRYN

C-c-c-c-combo!

ALEX

That's fine. I will give you the surface level thoughts in Japanese and then allow other people to weigh in conversation wise ok. Surface level thoughts

are as follows. Arghhhh! My leg. My god damn leg. Argh. Oh my god it hurts! Bleep this place! Bleep these people! I'll never walk again and then iterations upon that.

BRYN

I will share my new found understanding with the rest of the group.

BEN

Leg hurts. Got it. Right so you know what, when, where, why, who are you? Is there a way out? What's going on here? You know the standard kind of stuff. I'm going to heal his leg so he shuts up.

LYDIA

Ok cool. Ok we can interrogate. I've got something for this...

ALEX

Can I deal with the heal first and then the interrogation.

BEN

Yeah I cast calming touch. So that's 11 and it removes fatigue, shaken and sickened. Shaken might...you know, it's...also RP wise it's a calming touch.

ALEX

Yeah that's fine. He at least stops screaming.

BEN

I take my hand off of his mouth when he stops screaming because he has been told and has his chance.

ALEX

His mouth is closed.

BEN

Oh I have my glaive at his throat.

ALEX

That's fine.

LYDIA

Cel asks how many of you are there?

ALEX

I'm going to have to answer everything twice for detect thoughts and for vocals. In Japanese the answer is er loads of us. His thought is oh god, I'm the only one on shift.

HELEN

[gasps]

ALEX

I'm going to have to keep these answers short for obvious reasons.

BRYN

I say in not Japanese...

LYDIA

English yeah.

BRYN

He's...

LYDIA

Because you can also understand the Japanese as well! Ahhh!

BRYN

Yeah. I say what he said.

BEN

No you say what he thought.

BRYN

Yeah that's what I mean, sorry! I'm getting confused now!

ALEX

From now on, unless you say otherwise everyone has complete knowledge of the information apart from the kobolds because while Skraak knows the word “move” and a couple of other basics, it’s probably going to fly above his head if you’re talking quickly.

BEN

Also they’re suffering from anger-y.

ALEX

Oh yeah. All the angry. In fact I believe most of what they’re hearing is eeeee. You are up Lyd, continue your interrogation.

LYDIA

What is this for? What is this hideous prison for?

ALEX

The answer is well, you know, they’re kobolds.

LYDIA

Oh the rage!

ALEX

The thought is, he's still thinking about how he's the only one on shift and he's also thinking that, god I'm the only one on shift and most of the rest are in the tunnel.

HELEN

Oh yeah there's a tunnel back to the...oh yeah I forgot about that.

BRYN

I say that he thought that.

LYDIA

Ok, ok, ok. Where is the tunnel? To the mainland. To the island.

ALEX

What...er...

LYDIA

Out of here. That tunnel.

ALEX

I'm not going to require an intimidate check. You're all just terrifying.

LYDIA

If I thought that we needed it, I would cast focus scrutiny...

ALEX

There's no need to.

LYDIA

...but contextually no need.

ALEX

There's really not. He's just like well...if you follow this...you go through the...you go through the barracks and then there's the...basically the central command and then you're just through to the tunnel.

LYDIA

Ok how do we let the kobolds out?

ALEX

Why would you let the kobolds out? They're kobolds.

HELEN

No they're...oh wait I don't understand.

BRYN

Yeah.

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ALEX

Meanwhile...

BEN

Nor can I!

HELEN

I want to be angry at him!

ALEX

Additional thoughts, god I hope the tunnel ambush worked otherwise I am screwed.

BRYN

Oh I relate that!

LYDIA

Who are you ambushing?

ALEX

What...how did...I'm not ambushing anyone. I'm on shift!

LYDIA

Who are the people in the tunnel ambushing?

ALEX

What...er...erm...

LYDIA

What happened to my village?

ALEX

I don't...who are you? What's going on?

LYDIA

Just shakes him. Physically shakes him.

ALEX

That's fine. Now it's mostly just like what the hell is going on.

BEN

Fun fact when Cel shakes him, obviously his neck's gonna to get cut. Not like deeply but I've got my glaive there. Which is fun but he's going to have an uncomfortable time.

LYDIA

No, what, what were they going out of the tunnel to do?

BEN

I will say, easy Cel.

ALEX

But they're...they're not going...they go out to get supplies and stuff.

LYDIA

We're going to need to check my...we need to rescue the kobolds first because we're here and then I need to check on Jasper and the others. In English.

ALEX

A thought pops into his head. Let me get this right. Oh crap, these are the people we're meant to be ambushing.

(laughing)

BRYN

I think they had set an ambush in the tunnel for us.

ALEX

He's really quite concerned and upset at this realisation.

BRYN

I think that we got here by the boat and they didn't expect that so...

LYDIA

Ok, ok, ok, ok focus on the kobolds...

BRYN

It's going to be ok. We're going to get...

LYDIA

The underground crime, not the above ground crime.

BRYN

We're going to get back to Jasper soon. It's going to be ok.

ALEX

For everyone who doesn't speak Japanese, the prisoner suddenly seems way more on board with talking. Don't know what happened, it's just a bit of an attitude change.

BEN

Well we do because he would've told us.

ALEX

As long as you've been telling them then there yeah that.

LYDIA

Yeah in fact you...I assume that you'd be relaying that in English so he doesn't know.

BRYN

Yeah absolutely, yeah. I'm saying what I hear...

BEN

We have a cycle going where we all know what he's said and thought.

ALEX

So did ya...so you made it through the...

LYDIA

You don't need to know that. How do we let the kobolds out.

BRYN

Ask him about the green eyes, what that means.

LYDIA

Yeah why are their eyes green and how do we make them better? Why have they been drugged? What have you done to them? And yes I do realise that this is too many questions.

ALEX

Which do you want answering? Skraak's now getting a little bit impatient.

LYDIA

What have you done to the kobolds?

ALEX

Big boss he just used the juice on them. They're all doing what they're told like they should. I don't understand.

LYDIA

When does it...how long does it take to run out?

ALEX

I dunno, like a day.

LYDIA

A day. Ok, ok. And how do we stop...how do we let them out? How do we open the cages?

ALEX

I mean they've got like doors. Open the doors.

LYDIA

Is there a button that controls all of them because there's a lot of doors in there.

BEN

Hey, tell you what, I think the kobolds will know if they're doing maintenance so...

LYDIA

That is true.

BEN

...so we'll let them free themselves and we'll get rid

ALEX

What did you guys do?

LYDIA

So Cel is going to turn around and then in their emergent draconic so they're going to say the team, so the juice that he used, I knew it was a catalysing thing, it's also being used to control the kobolds. But if it only takes a day to wear off so we can...we can...they'll be ok in like a day. It's going to be ok.

ALEX

No, no, no. You really don't want to let them out.

LYDIA

Why?

ALEX

They're basically just feral. They'll just...they'll just go after everyone. You don't want to do that.

LYDIA

They'll go after you because you've kept them in a cage.

ALEX

I mean yeah but like they'll bring this place down on us.

LYDIA

Turn...good! Turns around to the...

BRYN

Two birds, one stone.

BEN

That's what I was thinking.

LYDIA

Turns around to the kobolds and says because I'm assuming these words would've been used within context, like your friends will be ok.

ALEX

Yeah that's fine. I'll allow that or at least close enough.

LYDIA

Yeah the friends, they will be ok.

ALEX

Skraak without turning away gives an order to the other two kobolds. Hamid, for your benefit and maybe a little bit of Cel, start letting them out. And they run off. They literally just scarper back to the door and start reaching up to...

LYDIA

Open the doors. Is there - and then turns around - is there a manual override to open all the doors?

ALEX

You can't. They're just monsters. They will just kill everything.

BRYN

No they won't.

BEN

Right I think we're done here. Hey Skraak, have at him.

HELEN

I let go of Skraak.

BEN

I keep my glaive at this man's throat.

ALEX

So I am going to do an artful pull aside as Skraak goes up with murder in his eyes and a spear in his eyes. We're going to cut briefly away because bleurgh, to the cavern proper. In the cavern proper I'm going to give you a description that your characters won't necessarily know but I'm kind of assuming free information, the door's been left open. The kobolds, the amount of green in their eyes has decreased to no more than you were seeing in the others and failing perception checks on which is a tiny little green ring. That's basically all that's going on now at this point. A few of them are shifting around. What they are starting to do is to start to look, for instance, slightly uncomfortable among other things. They're not rioting but they're fidgeting. Take a moment to consider the sound of tens of thousands of people fidgeting. It's louder than you might think. The two that are out are immediately sort of basically opening the nearest doors and then trying to talk to the ones who are nearest. They're in a worse state than the two who were there and unfortunately they don't really seem to be able to help at this stage so they're basically being left in front of their doors and then they're starting on the next ones and the next ones. They're running across the walkways. A couple of the others who are...who were on the walkways have started kind of reacting. They start making a little gang effectively and where the walkways converge...

BRYN

Freedom pyramid scheme.

ALEX

Basically a posse is forming in the platform where the lift is. We are going to return to the guard, let's call him, is very much dispatched. Did you stay to support/supervise Skraak or did you just leave him to do his business.

LYDIA

Cel walked away.

BEN

I stayed.

ALEX

Ok cool. It was...

BEN

What about Hamid?

BRYN

Oh yeah Hamid stayed.

ALEX

It was positively vicious. It was...unnecessarily so by which I mean it went beyond, even once the person was dead and Skraak enjoyed it a lot. A lot.

BEN

Skraak?

ALEX

Hmm?

BEN

Glad you can understand me now. Right, here's what's going to happen. Your lot are letting everyone out, right. You know how this place works.

ALEX

Skraak's frowning a little bit. Too fast.

BEN

You and your friends...

ALEX

Points at Hamid and says in draconic, translate.

BEN

Right

(laughing)

BRYN

Hamid does.

ALEX

That's fine. And now you can continue.

BEN

So you and your lot are letting everyone out, right. You know how this place works yeah?

ALEX

Hmm

BEN

So we're going to get rid of the other contingent while we leave because we've got to go out through that ambush tunnel but through the wrong way, which is great. I think we've dealt with Shoin, this place is yours.

ALEX

Why would we want it?

BEN

Dunno. Do what you want with it? If you want to destroy it. Destroy it. If you want to keep it. Keep it.

LYDIA

Is there enough food down here for you because if you want to come up to the...

BEN

Have you come back?

LYDIA

Oh this was...no, Cel walked away from the vicious slaughter.

BEN

We're standing next to this man's body.

LYDIA

Then this...ok well then probably would've given them time and when the slaughtering sounds stopped.

BEN

Ok so if you've come back, you've come back. I just want to make it clear that we're standing next to this person.

LYDIA

Comes back, looks deeply sad but asks some practical questions in halting draconic. Is there enough food for you here?

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ALEX

It's fine.

LYDIA

It's fine?

ALEX

It's fine.

LYDIA

Could visit my village? We have tea.

ALEX

Your rapport seems to have somewhat lessened.

LYDIA

Yeah. It's an offer of support.

ALEX

He's beyond stern.

HELEN

No that's fine.

LYDIA

It seems appropriate.

ALEX

It's fine.

BEN

Right, you good?

ALEX

Hmm.

BEN

Good luck. We should go. I was always speaking in English. We're done here. We've got Shoin, the kobolds will get themselves out. We'll go kill the rest.

LYDIA

Wait, wait, do you know anything about the squids? The giant with...

BRYN

The kraken.

ALEX

Again Hamid's translating and so on.

LYDIA

Cel will try and say this in draconic and fail and eventually get...

ALEX

Takes a moment. Hmm they've been...it's hard to remember everything.
They've been erratic.

LYDIA

They were made here and they were maintained here but they went out and did stuff elsewhere.

ALEX

Yes

LYDIA

Ok, right he was beginning to lose control presumably as maybe the veins were getting his brain in the last six months or so maybe. Ok, maybe for the cure for the veins he uploaded into them. We can't know...

BEN

We need to talk to *him* when we get back. We can't really do anything more here. For that we need to find a way to get onto or into one of those kraken which is a whole other problem!

BRYN

Yeah.

LYDIA

Cel, for once, is not even like perkily like that sounds like a fun problem! Yeah. And is still not looking at the man on the ground. Ok so let's do this ambushing an ambush. It's like an ambush squared. Ha, ha, ha. Or cubed. Cubed I guess, maybe, it's many dimensions.

HELEN

I hope there is another cube.

BEN

Let's get on.

ALEX

Don't let them live.

BEN

We're not going to.

ALEX

If there are any left we will finish them.

HELEN

Good to know.

BRYN

Skraak do you want my help?

ALEX

Skraak turns around, picks up, I'd say one of the packs that was on the guy's belt, like it seems to be a little pack or something and starts heading down the corridor. Turns his back to you heading down the corridor towards the main complex with the pack in one hand and the dagger in the other. He just gives a wave with the dagger and says, look after yourselves little guys. And then heads down the corridor.

LYDIA

Alright little buddy!

HELEN

That's fair.

BRYN

Oh Skraak! One more thing – I'm going to run up to him and I'm going to say – I think you should have this too. And I'm going to hand him the stalking dagger that I found on the corpse of the rogue in the weird chess room.

ALEX

He grabs it, looks at it and then handles it terrifyingly efficiently.

HELEN

Ooh!

BEN

Somewhere Sasha gets a crush!

(laughing)

ALEX

Gives a nod...

LYDIA

I mean he did the backwards flip and all!

ALEX

Slides it into his belt, spear back over the shoulder.

BRYN

Seems like you've got things under control. I hope I'll see you again. I owe you and the rest of the kobolds a debt and I want to repay it sometime.

ALEX

Skraak looks you dead in the eye and says, yeah. You do. Then carries on walking down the corridor back towards the main complex and slams the door behind him

BRYN

Hamid looks a bit sad.

LYDIA

Aw! Is that from all the kobolds that you blasted?

BRYN

Yeah, yeah. Hamid feels super guilty about that.

ALEX

Aw!

HELEN

Come on Hamid.

BRYN

Right ambush yep.

BEN

Through the barracks. Let's go.

LYDIA

Reverse ambush

ALEX

So do you head down the corridor...

BRYN

Who ambushes the ambushers? Us! We do! We're going to do that.

ALEX

So you head down the corridor. Although this is significantly less elaborate than the stuff that was beneath water and so on, it's actually a lot more functional in that you reach an intersection and there are signs in Japanese. One says barracks. One says holding pens and then others say...one says basically...

BRYN

I'm presuming the holding pen sign is back the way we've come.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah, yeah

HELEN

Ok.

ALEX

One says administration and another says processing. I'm assuming you carry on to the barracks as that's where you were told the tunnel is. You don't have to. Do as you will.

BEN

We've been to Shoin's secret lair so we've probably got everything that's useful right.

BRYN

Yeah I...

BEN

Well Zolf would just turn down the barracks thing.

ALEX

You know by the way, from the blueprints that you looked at, as far as cave systems go, the natural cave systems are just expansive and of the ones that appeared to be worked it's a significant amount of real estate, let's call it. This isn't a place where you could go cool, I'd like to roll a perception check and search the place. No. You're asking to deconstruct a military city.

BRYN

You're probably right. Are you sure we shouldn't just check administration...no it's probably fine.

BEN

If you want to, check it.

BRYN

Ok I'll be quick

BEN

Right

HELEN

No, I'll come with you.

BEN

No I'm coming with, just yeah. I'm not standing here on my own.

ALEX

You head to administration.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Ok. So you head through to administration. Administration consists of a significant amounts of filing, in terms of like, literally it's filing cabinets and so

on. There doesn't appear to be anyone in there currently. It also doesn't frankly appear to have been used in a while. And you notice that there appear to be stock quotas and reports and so on. They're about a year out of date and it's quite messy and appears to be largely abandoned as a place.

LYDIA

So this is a slightly wider character thing, that Cel would be aware of damage that had been done and things that had been taken from their village and from others including...

ALEX

What you can tell at a glance is that at a guess, looking at the dates on paperwork and so on, administration stopped being administered at the time that basically the thugs started getting a lot more thuggy and a lot more aggressive and it went from...initially it was like please donate to a tax to basically a shake down. This ties in from when it went from a very heavy "tax" to a shake down.

HELEN

Oh dear.

LYDIA

Yeah it's about trying to...I'm trying to remember the amount of damage done to nearby villages because you said places were almost abandoned and whether there would be things that could be taken back that might help fix them.

ALEX

From this room not in a way that you can tell. In terms of the room by the way, it's not large, by the way, like administration for something of this size is a joke. It's mostly, basically, a quartermaster's study.

HELEN

Well they clearly don't have human resources so like...

ALEX

I know right! It's real weird!

BRYN

Ok so basically quick scan of the room is anything in here relevant to the weird masterplans or is it all just here are my thugs, here's their employment records.

LYDIA

If there was an admin thing for where the squids are going to be on patrol that is what we're particularly looking for.

ALEX

Very much no. This is very much thug administration.

BRYN

This is the thuggy human side of the operation.

ALEX

Absolutely.

BRYN

Cool. We don't spend too long.

HELEN

Yeah ok. So barracks next.

ALEX

So heading through to the barracks you turn a couple of corners and then you find yourselves at the barracks. It has another one of those pressure doors actually but in terms of the barracks it is horrible.

(laughing)

It stinks. It is in very poor nick. It has been slept in recently. Clearly. Like well populated. There is muck on the floor. There appears to have been a card game halfway through. It looks like people left in a hurry but not in a panic if that makes sense. So it's a mess. The sheets are all soiled. Like it's not...it's a pretty rank place if I'm honest. No windows. Obviously it's...

LYDIA

If there were I'd be impressed.

ALEX

Yeah it's not much. There's a footlocker at the end of each cot and in terms of how many cots, you're looking all told at about 50 tops. So it's a large room but we are talking military style barracks that are in complete disarray. Like discipline doesn't seem to really factor in to the thug bootcamp.

BEN

Carry on through.

ALEX

Heading through, you head through another pressure door. There's another helpful set of signs. So there's one that says processing, there's one that points back to administration in the barracks and there's one that points towards central control.

LYDIA

Can I suggest that we pop our heads into processing to work out what it is because if there's any connection between the process by which he controls the kobolds and the process by which the blue vein things happen there maybe be some sort of thing to learn. Maybe.

BEN

Makes sense.

HELEN

Alright

ALEX

Do you head to processing?

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

Ok cool. Again for all of these there's a decent walk between them. You're starting to suspect that the people have retrofitted natural caverns so they're a little bit circuitous. If you were a kobold, it's the shape a kobolds' warren would take really. But nonetheless you are heading through and then you head into processing. It's a larger cavern that appears broadly empty at this point and it appears to have been empty for a while. There is significant amounts of machinery and alchemical tubing coming from the ceiling and so on. There are eight metal table...you know the examination tables...

LYDIA

Is this where the ports got put in the kobolds necks?

ALEX

This is certainly a place where that kind of thing has been happening. they are tiltable tables with foot and...

BRYN

Are they kobold sized?

ALEX

Yes

BEN

Yeah ok.

BRYN

Ok

BEN

Right well that's what they're processing.

HELEN

This is disgusting.

ALEX

It is a room for priming people for horrible things. That's what it is.

LYDIA

I would like to do a knowledge engineering-y type thing. I don't know what it would be to see if there's anything that is blue vein relevant.

ALEX

Give me a knowledge engineering and I'll see what comes out of it.

LYDIA

I mean that is only a 15.

ALEX

No.

LYDIA

Ok.

ALEX

Frankly it's quite difficult...like as far as you can tell here is a room where kobolds are maybe prepped in some way so that the stuff has more of an effect. This isn't even the place where stuff is administered. It is probably...your educated guess is when you were setting up you would need to deal with kobolds in batches, not an entire kobold set in one go and as a result that's what this is. It doesn't really...

LYDIA

Probably...once they processed everyone. Ok, right well this is just horrible, not informative. So useful distinction but let's -pivots on their backheel – let's go.

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BEN

Central control

HELEN

Yes

ALEX

And that is a sensible place I think to end the episode as we power towards central...central control he says but having...

BEN

We've been to real central...we've been to the actual central control.

ALEX

Big air quotes on what central control might be for a thug warren.

HELEN

Urgh. Gross. Terrible people.

ALEX

Yes. Yes. Welcome to misery bedrock.

BEN

We've un-miseried a little bit so, you know.

ALEX

And on the bright side you can dig your way out through your enemies.

BEN

Yeah got a couple of fireballs.

LYDIA

I mean I've got a lot of bombs so there won't be much left.

HELEN

I've got a lot of anger! Yeah!

LYDIA

It's less digging and more wading.

BRYN

Oh these enemies have a big storm coming!

(laughing)

ALEX

Bye guys!

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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